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An Army Needs Greater Artillery Reinforcement
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A thorough analysis of the capabilities of the conventional means of neutralizing an enemy in breakthrough sectors not being destroyed by nuclear weapons, as experience of operational exercises shows, is not being done in staffs. Therefore, the problem of artillery reinforcement frequently does not receive the proper objective solution. As a result, armies advancing on a main axis are reinforced by one or two artillery regiments, which is clearly inadequate.

Given such artillery reinforcement, neutralizing enemy personnel and fire means (which are in direct contact with our forces), with the necessary density and in a short time, is impossible. As a consequence of this, the rate of the offensive is slowed down, which has a negative effect on the exploitation of the results of massed nuclear strikes by the troops of the army.

Comparative data on the safe distance zones and the zones of destruction by nuclear warheads of various yields demand strict differentiation of the capabilities of nuclear weapons and conventional means when neutralizing and destroying an enemy located in the strong points of the first position of his defense.

Let us consider this in a specific example. According to the Manual for Calculating the Destruction of Targets with Nuclear Weapons and for Evaluating the Radiation Situation (Part One), the safe distance of troops (personnel in trenches) from ground zero of a strike for a three-kiloton nuclear warhead equals 2,200 meters. If one assumes that the distance between the troops of the sides will be 400 to 500 meters, then a nuclear strike against a defending enemy when there is direct contact with him can be delivered not closer than 2,100 meters from our forward edge of the defense. 50X1-HUM

Consequently, company strong points, the depth of which is 1,100 meters, can be destroyed by nuclear weapons only under the condition that our troops be withdrawn from occupied positions to a safe distance prior to

the delivery of nuclear strikes. To carry out such a step secretly in the face of modern means of reconnaissance is almost impossible. This indicates that solution of the problems of using conventional means of destruction, primarily artillery, even in an army offensive with the use of nuclear weapons, has not been removed from the agenda. They must be studied and given proper attention in the planning of an operation.

What quantity of artillery is it necessary to allocate for the neutralization of strong points against which, on the strength of the reasons indicated above, nuclear weapons cannot be used?

For making calculations we shall assume that an army breaks through the defense in several sectors, with an overall front of seven kilometers, where various units, in all up to an enemy infantry brigade, are defending. In this case, the second-echelon companies of the battalions and the second-echelon battalion of the brigade, as well as other targets beyond the limits of the brigade's battle formations will be neutralized by nuclear weapons. Under the conditions we have given, reliable neutralization of targets not being destroyed by nuclear weapons requires the following quantity of artillery: to destroy personnel and fire means in 12 platoon strong points -- 12 artillery battalions (216 guns); to neutralize 12 artillery batteries, with consideration for the fact that all of them have nuclear warheads, four mortar sections, and four Davy Crocket launchers -- 32 artillery batteries (194 guns); to neutralize 20 armored gun emplacements -- 60 guns.

Thus, to successfully accomplish the indicated fire tasks of an army, 470 guns or about 21 artillery battalions are required. But an army in a breakthrough sector can allocate at most 258 guns and mortars: the artillery of two motorized rifle divisions -- 138 guns, and an army artillery brigade -- 72 guns. Besides this, participating in the preparatory fire and fire support of the attack without change of positions will be the artillery of a second-echelon division of the army -- 48 guns.

Consequently, it is necessary to reinforce the attacking army, even with the use of nuclear weapons, with not less than ten to 12 battalions, i.e., with one artillery division of the Reserve of the Supreme High 50X1-HUM Command.

Sometimes tanks can be allocated for participation in preparatory fire. It is to the point to mention that this may be detrimental to the fulfilment of their immediate tasks by the tanks. But if one assumes that, in the given case, three tank battalions will participate, then the
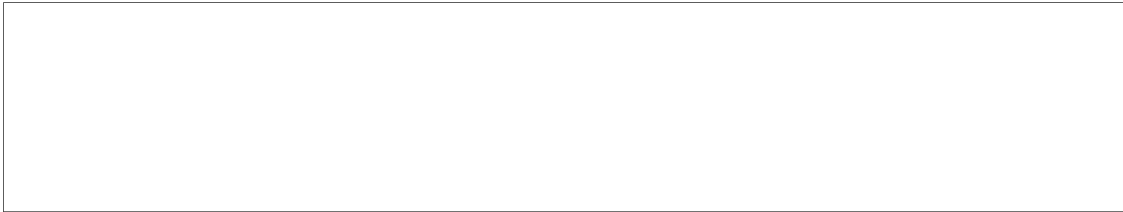
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necessary artillery reinforcement of the army is reduced by only two to three battalions in all.

The calculations presented above also apply in predicting the artillery and mortar needs in an offensive operation conducted without the use of nuclear weapons.

In this connection, attention should be directed to a certain inexactitude which was allowed in calculations in the treatment of this problem in the article of General-Mayor of Artillery I. Konoplev and General-Mayor of Artillery V. Kuznetsov.* One cannot agree with their assertion that neutralization of the personnel and fire means of two defending battalions in a breakthrough sector requires six artillery battalions (Page 28). It is known that every company strong point, according to accepted norms in the US Army, consists of 1,500 meters along the front and 1,100 meters in depth, in other words, an area up to one and one-half square kilometers, or 150 hectares. One artillery battalion is unable to neutralize personnel and fire means in all this area. In practice, we go on the assumption that usually each battalion can neutralize one platoon strong point (eight to nine hectares). Therefore, simultaneous neutralization of the first-echelon companies of two defending battalions requires not 144 guns, but 216 (12 artillery battalions).

Thus, for support of a breakthrough in a sector with a front of only seven kilometers and for successful conduct of an army offensive operation, not 470 but 595 guns and mortars are required, that is, reinforcement with one and one-half artillery divisions. This will give the capability of having up to 90 guns and mortars per kilometer of front of the breakthrough sector. When breaking through the defense in a large sector, significantly more reinforcement in artillery is required.

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*Collection of Articles of the Journal "Military Thought", No. 2 (75), 1965.